

Work Session

Agenda Item #	5
Meeting Date	October 17, 2005
Prepared By	Barbara B. Matthews
Approved By	

Discussion Item	Overview of Library Services
Background	<p>By Resolution 2004-50, the City Council created the Residents' Committee on Tax and Service Duplication Issues (TASDI). The Council directed the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To become knowledgeable of the legal requirements and constraints of municipal tax duplication in the State of Maryland and in Montgomery County and recommend how the city can communicate this information to the public • To identify areas where further research is needed concerning tax relief and service duplication • To recommend actions the city could take to obtain a fairer tax duplication payment from Montgomery County and to decrease the level of tax duplication paid by city property owners • To provide assistance and guidance in the development of a resident survey, specifically in regard to those questions concerning service delivery <p>The TASDI Committee issued its report to the City Council in April 2005.</p> <p>At the work session on October 17, 2005, Library Directory Ellen Arnold-Robbins will present information on the services provided by the Takoma Park Library. The discussion will be the starting point for discussion of the TASDI Committee's two recommendations relative to library services which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It is possible significant savings may be secured by reducing the Library's collection and focusing on several core areas. Book collections could be limited to niche interests, and library programming could focus on a particular constituency, such as children, or on services such as literacy training or other educational classes. As an example, the Noyes Library for Young Children, located in Kensington, employs a specialized approach for children." • "The Committee recommends the City launch a fundraising initiative on behalf of the library in cooperation with the Friends of the Library or other supporters." <p>In addition to Library Director Ellen Arnold-Robbins, members of the TASDI Library Work Group have been invited to attend the work session. A representative of Friends of the Library will be present as well.</p>
Policy	The City Council is responsible for setting the budget and level of service provided by the City government.

Fiscal Impact	The FY06 budget for the Takoma Park Library is \$866,172. This figure includes the cost of operating the Computer Learning Center. The budget for the library division is \$803,147.
Attachments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Excerpt from the Report of the Residents' Committee on Tax and Service Duplication Issues addressing the Committee's analysis of library services 2) Memo dated October 12, 2005 from Library Director Ellen Arnold-Robbins regarding the recommendations of the TASDI Committee
Recommendation	For Discussion Only
Special Consideration	

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

VIA: Barbara B. Matthews
City Manager

FROM: Ellen Arnold-Robbins
Library Director

DATE: October 12, 2005

SUBJECT: Re: TASDI Recommendations for the Library

This Memorandum provides some supplemental information that may be useful to the Council and to citizens in the consideration of the TASDI Report on the Library.

TASDI Report on the Library

The Completed report recommended the exploration of whether 'significant savings' could be realized by offering specialized rather than general services at the Library, and the launching of a fund-raising initiative in cooperation with the Friends and other supporters.

1. The following information may be relevant in considering the potential transformation of the Takoma Park Library into one that serves only some segments of the local community:

*At present we serve a multiplicity of users - children, immigrant learners, college students, parents and caregivers, retired citizens, avid readers of all ages, families and school classes.

*These patrons visit us for the broad spectrum of materials they would seek out at any public library. The existence of the City Library allows them to find those materials and services at a convenient location.

*45% or nearly half of the books checked out in FY 04 were from the adult collection.

*Currently the Library has 15,509 adult cardholders (18 or older - active and inactive) and 5,335 juvenile cardholders.

*Children use the Library during all operating hours. While use by elementary age children may be perceived as heaviest after school, the parents of preschoolers and teachers with classes tend to bring their children in the mornings or early afternoons, and high school or college students often come in the evening.

*Children who come to the Library for homework and research assignments do not use children's books exclusively. They also depend on general (adult) periodicals, newspapers and reference books and adult nonfiction to complete assignments.

The above facts are intended to exemplify that it is difficult, if not impossible, to circumscribe the materials and service hours that address the needs of any particular group of Library users, unless that group is very narrowly construed.

2. The following supplemental information is offered regarding the level and extent of past fund-raising activities of the Friends of the Library:

* The Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library are a committed and energetic group of supporters that have given the Library nearly \$55,000 in goods and services over a ten year period - from 1994 through March of 2005 - that is an average of \$5,543 per year. Their funds are raised through memberships, used book sales and silent auctions at special events. They have also been the recipient of donations by some individuals and by other groups, such as the Takoma Horticulture Club, Historic Takoma, and the friends of Mike Morrissey, who donate proceeds of an annual golf tournament to the Library through the Friends.

* In recent years they have donated all our new Useful public computer workstations, funding for our Summer Quest summer reading program, a server upgrade that enabled our catalog to be put on the Web, several thousand lanyards for children's Library cards, textbooks for ESOL learners, online databases for cardholders such as the Electric Library, support for the Film Festival and the Favorite Poem evening and innumerable storytellers and performers for public programs at the Library.

* Over the past several years, the Friends have contributed the following in gifts to the Library:

2004 - \$8,987
2003 - \$3,914
2002 - \$4,972
2001 - \$5,705
2000 - \$4,764
1999 - \$5,905

The Friends are invaluable in promoting and extending the Library's role in the Takoma Park Community through author readings and other literary events, as well as fund-raising. Whether their 12-member Board would or could undertake a major fund-raising campaign to help meet the Library's operating expenses is a matter that has yet to be put forward for their consideration.